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Krzysztof Penderecki's *St. Luke Passion*, *Polish Requiem*
and *Credo* in the Context of Polish History

*This is a country torn away from its own past
by the forceful means imposed by the communists,
but it is so strongly tied with that past
that it reconstructs its capital from Canaletto paintings.*
Jean-Paul Sartre¹

*Man must know where he comes from
in order to know where he is going.
A nation without history loses its way
like a man without memory.*
As Orwell put it, "the totalitarian regime buries history in
the grave of the memory."
Norman Davies²

Krzysztof Penderecki's works and the historical situations in which they emerged are linked by relations which are complex, sometimes remote and difficult to specify. In spite of stylistic transformations that the composer's works undergo (mainly in the area of musical language), his oeuvre is internally coherent and bears prominent and recognisable marks of his personality; as an artistic phenomenon it is recognisable and possible to receive without the awareness of the historical context.

Nonetheless, the attitude of Penderecki as an artist, his choice of themes or the messages which his consecutive works carry do refer meaningfully, although sometimes very broadly, to the times when he has had to live and work, to the historical (political, social or cultural) situations and events which took place in Poland and in the world in the second half of the 20th Century.

¹Quoted after *Dzieje Polski. Kalendarium* ["History of Poland. A Chronology"], ed. by Andrzej Chwalba, Kraków 1999, p. 758 (English translation by A. Łopatka).

²Norman Davies, *Boże igrzysko. Historia Polski* ["God's Playground. A History of Poland"], Kraków 1999, p. 807 (English translation by A. Łopatka).

Studying his works from this perspective allows us to turn to a highly interesting dimension of Penderecki's music: to meanings that can be uncovered through the historical context. This line of research requires particular caution in order not to fall into dangerous simplifications and not to lose from sight the fact that this is only one of many dimensions of his works.

The attitude of the composer towards historical reality uncovered through the sphere of meanings carried by his music is quite characteristic. Some transformations of this attitude may be pointed out, which may be interpreted as a form of reaction of the artist to the changing historical reality.

POLAND AFTER WORLD WAR II

I. CONSEQUENCES OF YALTA – LOSS OF SOVEREIGNTY	
1945–1948 COMMUNIST TAKEOVER	
1948–1956 STALINIST PERIOD introduction of the totalitarian system	
1948	Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński elected Primate of Poland; persecution of the Church intensifies; trials of priests
1949	government adopts the decree restricting the freedom of public religious practices; official cultural policy: the program of socialist realism
1952	Radio Free Europe established in Munich
1953	death of Joseph Stalin; political show trials of independent political activists, generals, priests the Polish bishops protest against persecution: “Non possumus”; Primate of Poland arrested
1955	Warsaw Pact established (military alliance)

1. The Political Thaw of October 1956 in Poland. Krzysztof Penderecki and the Avant-Garde

1.1. “The Polish October”

The isolation of Eastern Europe from the rest of the continent, the Iron Curtain built by the communist system, which culminated in the Stalinist era in the late 1940s and early 1950s served the purpose of subjugating the artists to the Marxist doctrine. It was to be implemented by the so called “committed art” which had to correspond to the norms of socialist realism.

The political breakthrough of 1956, known as the “Polish October,” did lead to the short-lived “thaw” and loosening of the grip of the totalitarian system over Poland, in spite of the awareness on the part of the Poles of the tragic experience of the contemporary Hungarian uprising, which restrained the scope of possible transformations of the system.

1956
“Polish October” – a political thaw
“June events” in Poznań: the workers’ rebellion crushed
demonstrations in October
Polish communist Władysław Gomułka rises to power
concessions of the endangered communist regime:
– release of the Primate
– limiting of censorship
– partial repatriation of Poles from the USSR
uprising in Hungary crushed by the Soviet army
founding of the independent journal “Kultura” in Paris

In the field of art significant attempts were made at that time which aimed at extending the limits of artistic freedom. A particularly important role in the development of Polish music was played by the newly created Festival of Contemporary Music “Warsaw Autumn” (“Warszawska Jesień”) which enabled young Polish composers:

- to encounter artists from West European countries and their music,
- to get to know new techniques and trends which dominated in Western Europe (e.g. serialism, pointillism, aleatorism, sonorism),
- to focus on purely aesthetic issues.

1.2. Penderecki and New Trends in Western Music

Penderecki starts his creative life with an attempt to expand and enrich the sonorous material, to search for new techniques of its organisation and to experiment in notation.

“My works written by the end of the fifties and in the early sixties, such as ‘Polymorphia’ and ‘Threnody,’ were then something completely novel, a new proposal. When trying to operate with sound blocks, to develop a new technique of sound production, e.g. on string instruments, I made discoveries which are now a permanent part of contemporary musical language.”³

Penderecki expands the palette of instrumental and then also of vocal tone-colours to include a number of new hues (e.g. *Trenody*, *Anaklasis*, *Dimensions of Time and Silence*, *Fluorescences*) which were obtained mainly by unconventional means of sound articulation, free treatment of pitch (smooth pitch oscillation, quarter-tones and glissandos, cluster and pointillist techniques) as well as by introduction of new sources of sound (see Music Example No. 1).⁴

The works are built from sound segments of varied internal structures: from the ones shaped relatively freely and partially rigorous ones to those strictly following mathematical ordering.⁵ A characteristic procedure applied by Penderecki in building segments consists in multiplying a selected sonorous model of a specific harmony (or a set of variants of the model) within a given segment, which results in a texture with a clearly specified tone-colour quality. Diversifying sonorous models

³Krzysztof Penderecki, *Muzyki nie można zaczynać od początku* [“You cannot start Music from Scratch”], in: *Ruch Muzyczny* 31, No. 22 (1987), p. 8.

⁴See Danuta Mirka, *The Sonoristic Structuralism of Krzysztof Penderecki*, Katowice 1997.

⁵Mainly with regard to grouping sounds and the rhythm; see Krzysztof Bilica, *Quartetto per archi (No. 1) Krzysztofa Pendereckiego* [“K.P.’s First String Quartet”], in: *Kwartet smyczkowy w polskiej muzyce współczesnej* [“The String Quartet in Contemporary Polish Music”], ed. by Jan Rychlik, Kraków 1977, pp. 85-95.

62 con aord.
x. b.
5...

63

12 Vn 1-12

4 Vn 13-16

3 VI 1-3

3 Vc 1-3

4 Vn 17-24

3 VI 4-6

3 Vc 4-6

4 Vn 21-24

3 VI 7-9

3 Vc 7-9

10 Vc 1-10

8 Cb 1-8

5th

5th

Music Example No. 1: Penderecki, *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960), PWM, p. 20

which are subjected to these procedures as well as combining various models within one segment leads to a wide repertoire of tone-colours. The basis of the formal construction in which the composer uses the assembly technique is a play of sonorous contrasts between segments of different texture, arranged consecutively or overlapping, partly or fully. Musical narration is not limited to free arrangement of colour effects (as is often the case in sonoristic works), but is highly dramatised by a clear pattern of tensions within a closed form.

New sonorous effects and ways of shaping the temporal course of the work, different from traditional composing, required the introduction of suitable methods of notation.⁶ On the one hand, Penderecki introduces many new signs (particularly to indicate new articulation methods); on the other hand, he uses numerous variants of proportional notation made more precise by metronome clues or duration indications in seconds. Among the works composed at this time, small size pieces prevail, usually designed for string ensembles.

Penderecki writes several vocal-instrumental works then, which are important not only for the breakthrough of musical language they bring, but also because they mark future trends in the composer's output: sacred music – *The Psalms of David*, secular music – *Strophes* (linked to humanistic values), and instrumental music – *Dimensions of Time and Silence* where music is primarily considered to be a play. *Dimensions of Time and Silence* perhaps fit best the avant-garde and sonoristic trend by enriching Penderecki's repertoire of compositional means. It also displays the most strongly the composer's tendency to seek a new formal order inspired by the abstract magic square model or the formal painting conceptions of Paul Klee (see Music Example No. 2).⁷

⁶Trygve Nordwall, *Krzysztof Penderecki – studium notacji i instrumentacji* [“K.P. – a Study of Notation and Instrumentation”], in: *Res facta* 2 (1968), pp. 79-112; Ray Robinson, *The Evolution of Penderecki's Orchestra from 'Threnody' to 'Fluorescences'*, in: *Studies in Penderecki*, vol. II: *Penderecki and the Avant Garde*, ed. by Ray Robinson and Regina Chłopicka, Princeton, N.J., pp. 249-256.

⁷See Regina Chłopicka, *Extra-Musical Inspirations in the Early Works of Krzysztof Penderecki*, in: *Studies in Penderecki*, vol. II, pp. 257-272.

The image displays two pages of a musical score for Penderecki's *Dimensions of Time and Silence*. The left page (pp. 6 and 17) features a percussion section with staves for Xylor, Vbf, Cmpl, Cel, Ar, and Pfte. The right page continues the percussion section with staves for Xylor, Vbf, Cmpl, Cel, Ar, and Pfte, and includes string parts for Vn, Vl, Vc, and Vb. The score is written in a complex, non-linear fashion, with measures numbered 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

Music Example No. 2: Penderecki, *Dimensions of Time and Silence*, PWM, pp. 6 and 17

2. The 1960s and 1970s in Poland. Penderecki's Music and the Sphere of the Sacred

2.1. The Polish Variety of Communism

The pressure by the communist state, based on mendacious, anti-spiritual ideology, was reinforced to embrace all spheres of life which was a means of maintaining the USSR-dependent political and economic system in the country. This led to dramatic protests of intellectuals and students (the famous Letter signed by 34 prominent intellectuals, student riots of March 1968) and workers (tragic events of December 1970 when the police and army opened fire on workers).

The attacks on the Catholic Church increased again aiming at weakening its position in public opinion e.g. by:

- an attempt to discredit prominent bishops (e.g. accusation of the Primate of Poland and the bishops of treason after their famous letter to the German bishops which started with the words “We forgive you and ask for forgiveness”);
- an attempt to replace religious rituals with secular ceremonies (the conflict surrounding the celebration of the Millennium of Christianity in Poland in 1966) etc.

1956–1980	
THE POLISH VARIETY OF COMMUNISM	
1. WŁADYSŁAW GOMUŁKA IN POWER 1956–1970	
1957	gradual return of the system of repression and reinforcement of censorship (e.g. shutdown of the independent “Po prostu” paper)
1958	removal of religious instruction from schools; Nowa Huta quarter of Kraków – the struggle to defend the cross
1962	abolition of independent cultural centres (Klub Krzywego Koła)
1963	the “Letter of 34” – protest of intellectuals and artists in support of independent national culture (14 th March)

1964	letter of the Polish bishops to the “brothers in the Council” from the German Church (8 th November); Episcopate and the Primate accused in the Sejm of high treason (14 th December)
1966	Conflict surrounding the Millennium celebration: Gomułka proclaims the secular celebration of 1000 years of the Polish state (attempts to organise parallel celebrations); main religious celebration of the 1000 years of Christianity in Poland run by Archbishop Karol Wojtyła and Primate Stefan Wyszyński at “ Jasna Góra ” Monastery in Częstochowa (the authorities do not allow Pope Paul VI to attend the celebration); some religious celebrations interrupted by the regime (a procession dispersed, 400 people arrested – 26 th May)
1968	<i>Dziady</i> by Adam Mickiewicz – famous staging of the 19th-Century Romantic play in the Teatr Narodowy in Warsaw banned (16 th January); Gomułka: “this is stabbing Polish-Soviet friendship right in the back.” demonstrations at Warsaw University brutally suppressed; students arrested, expelled from the university (among them Adam Michnik); demonstrations of youths and military attacks in other cities (9 th March – Warsaw, 11 th March – Kraków, 12 th March – Poznań, Łódź, Wrocław, Gdańsk, 14 th March – Toruń, 15 th March – Upper Silesia); power struggle – anti-Semitic campaign instigated by Gomułka intervention of Warsaw Pact troops in Czechoslovakia (August)
1970	“tragic events of December 1970” workers protest in Gdynia and Szczecin crushed
2. EDWARD GIEREK IN POWER 1970–1980	
1976	tragic Radom events – establishing of the unofficial Committee for the Defence of Workers (KOR)
1978	Cardinal Karol Wojtyła elected Pope (16 th October)
1979	first visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland (2 th –10 th June)

2.2. Penderecki's Search for Universal Values

Penderecki's attitude at this time is dominated by the tendency to rebuild the spiritual world, connected with the sphere of the sacred and universal values, to reconstruct symbolic memory by restoring the grand religious tradition of European culture:

- great religious themes (e.g. the Passion and death of Christ, the history of Salvation);
- established, significant liturgical texts (e.g. *Stabat Mater*, *Magnificat*);
- genres of sacred music (the Passion, the *Sacra rappresentazione*).

The themes which are not religious but related to the sphere of humanist values (anticipated in *Strophes* and manifested in full in *Cosmogony*) lead to the reinforcement of faith in the human being (see Music Example No. 3).

In the *St. Luke Passion*, the symbolic worlds of good and evil, truth and falsehood, love and hatred are contrasted, but in reference to the historical experience of the 20th Century.

"I reached for the archetype of the Passion [...] in order to express not only the sufferings and death of Christ, but also the cruelty of our own century, the martyrdom of Auschwitz."⁸

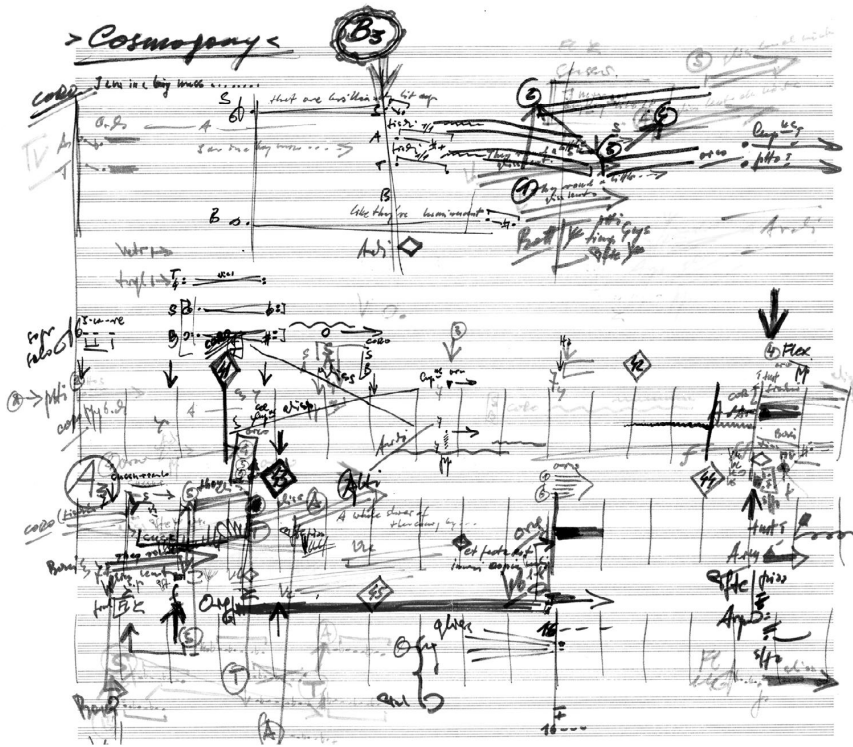
"I wanted my music to be a confession, I searched for an authentic, modern type of expression for eternal themes."⁹

In the area of composition techniques, the *St. Luke Passion* also constitutes an important attempt to combine modernity and tradition in one work, but Penderecki emphasises that "a synthesis cannot consist only in a mechanical combination of elements, but must stem from a unifying experience."¹⁰ The closure of the Passion on the words

⁸Krzysztof Penderecki, *Labyrinth of Time. Five addresses for the End of the Millennium*, ed. by Ray Robinson, translated by William Brand, Chapel Hill 1998, p. 17.

⁹*Passio artis et vitae* [Interview with Penderecki by Anna and Zbigniew Baran], in: Krzysztof Penderecki, *Labirynt czasu. Pięć wykładów na koniec wieku*, Warszawa 1997, p. 66.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 67.



Music Example No. 3: Penderecki, *Cosmogony*, sketch

“Deus veritatis” (“truthful God”), on a pure major triad, carries a symbolic message of hope (see Music Example No. 4).

Thus the path to save faith in the meaning of the world leads through the search of universal values in the sphere of the sacred. This kind of message, although sometimes conveyed in a different way and comprising additional references, can also be found in a number of later cantata-oratorio works from *Utrenia* to *Magnificat*, *Paradise Lost*, *Te Deum* and *Polish Requiem* to *Seven Gates of Jerusalem* and *Credo*.

D
CORII

9 *quasi recit.*
8 *meno mosso* 7 4 *a tempo*

rag S in manus tu-as commendo spi-ritum me-um Do-mi-ne, De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
A in manus tu-as commendo spi-ritum me-um Do-mi-ne, De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
I S te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, me, Do-mi-ne De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
A te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, -de- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
T te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, re- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
B te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, -mis- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
II S te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, -li- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
A te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, -de- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
T te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, re- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
B te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, -mis- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
III S te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, -li- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
A te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, -de- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
T te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, re- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.
B te, Do-mi-ne, spe-ra-vi, -mis- De-us ve-ri-ta-tis.

~ 9/8 7/8 4/4

fg
cfg
1-2
cr 3-4
5-6
tr 3-4
tn 1-2
3-4
tb
tmp
cmp
org
gng!
tamt!
vn div.
vl div.
vc div.
vb div.

Music Example No. 4: Penderecki, *St. Luke Passion*, PWM, p. 126

In *The Devils of Loudun*, the composer seeks the truth about man in a different way, presenting the sphere of evil and darkness, cruelty and intolerance. The main protagonist of the opera, Urban Grandier, is a small and weak man at the beginning, but his heroic testimony to the truth, although it leads him to death at the stake, also enables him to discover the meaning of life and faith in God in the finale of the work.

3. The 1980s: Time of Hope and Time of Defeat. Penderecki in the Sphere of National History

In the history of Poland, the link between religion and culture is quite unique. In the long period of foreign Partitions, at the time of German occupation and later during the Communist regime, when the nation was deprived of its own independent state, the preservation of national identity was possible only thanks to the maintenance of religious and cultural values. Art, also sacred art, played an important cultural and nation-building role. It was to serve the purpose of defending universal and national values and creating the sphere of symbolic freedom in the realm of the spiritual.

Undertaking grand religious themes in his works with universal messages, Penderecki moves into the zone of “musica sacra.” Attempting to “rebuild the metaphysical space of man,” the sphere of human spirituality, the artist expresses his protest against the destruction of values and the imprisoning of the society in the communist system. The universal message which is carried by his consecutive works in the 1980s is marked by a new perspective, stemming from the composer’s awareness of the ties with his own place on earth. Historical events which are important for Poland start to exert a growing influence on his music. The dramatic events of the 1980s found a strong resonance in the composer’s music. The *Polish Requiem* draws on the tragic chapters of Polish history, which are evoked as parts of the national ethos.

1980–1981 “SOLIDARITY” PERIOD	
1980	strikes at the coastal cities and all over the country (Lech Wałęsa and the Strike Committees)
1981	Pope assassination attempt (13 th May) death of Primate Stefan Wyszyński (28 th May) Gdańsk Accords signed (31 th August); “Solidarność” trade union officially registered (10 th November) The truth of Katyń publicly revealed (40 th anniversary of the murder of Polish army officers and intellectuals by the Soviets)

3.1. The Time of Hope: 1980–1981

This is the time when the struggle of the “Solidarność” trade union with the totalitarian system culminates. They fight for freedom, dignity and the right to say the truth about the history of Poland. Penderecki then writes the first two movements of the *Polish Requiem*, directly inspired by the historical events:

- *Lacrimosa*: a lamentation written to celebrate the unveiling of the monument to honour the shipyard workers, the victims of December 1970 – the symbol of the struggle of the workers with the communist regime. The lamentation was written in compliance with a request of Lech Wałęsa and was performed on 16th December 1980 during the commemoration ceremony, where nearly two million people gathered the manifestation of power of “Solidarność”;
- *Agnus Dei*: the supplicatory prayer for a cappella choir, written in memory of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, “the Primate of the Millennium,” and performed during the funeral mass in May 1981. His heroic resistance against the totalitarian system became the symbol of the struggle for spiritual values and significantly influenced the collective awareness of the Poles.

1981–1983 MARTIAL LAW	
1981	13th December – martial law imposed (Wojciech Jaruzelski) main opposition activists arrested and interned bloody crushing of miners’ strike in Wujek coal mine (Upper Silesia); protests and demonstrations underground culture thrives – independent media and literature publishing houses
1983	second visit of the Pope to Poland
1984	kidnapping and murder of Father Jerzy Popiełuszko , an outspoken critic of the regime
1985–1989 POLISH VARIETY OF RUSSIAN “PERESTROIKA”	

3.2. The Time of Defeat: 1982–1984

This was the time when martial law was imposed and aspirations for freedom were suppressed; there were reprisals against the political opposition, and Poland was cut off from the free world. Penderecki then writes new movements of the *Polish Requiem*, inspired by the current situation. They recall:

- the national and religious ethos: *Dies irae*, movement 1, dedicated to the Warsaw Uprising, the heroic and tragically unsuccessful two-month-long battle for independence of Poland during the Second World War (see Music Example No. 5);
- the heroic testimony of faith in the highest values: *Dies irae*, movement 2 (including *Recordare*), dedicated to Father Maksymilian Kolbe and his voluntary sacrifice of life in Auschwitz (see Music Example No. 6.);
- memory of tragic events: *Libera me Domine*, dedicated to the memory of the massacre of Katyń, where thousands of Polish army officers were murdered by the Soviets, the truth about which was concealed for decades (see Music Example No. 7).

Handwritten musical score for Penderecki's *Polish Requiem, Dies irae*, p. 1. The score is written on multiple staves for various instruments and voices. The top staff is labeled 'CORO' and features vocal lines with lyrics 'bi - es - se - re - re - se'. Below it are staves for woodwinds (flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon), strings (violin, viola, cello, double bass), and percussion (timpani, snare, cymbal). The notation is dense and complex, with many accidentals and dynamic markings.

Music Example No. 5: Penderecki, *Polish Requiem, Dies irae*, p. 1

The remaining movements, *Requiem eternam*, *Lux aeterna*, and *Finale*, constitute the framing of the work and complete the cycle. In 1993, the extended *Sanctus* movement was incorporated into the *Polish Requiem*, which shifted the balance of the work from the domination of dramatic parts connected with the “horror theatre,” “the sphere of darkness,” to that of prayerful, contemplative parts, the symbolic “sphere of light” (see Music Example No. 8).

Handwritten musical score for "Recondite Tem pie" by W.C. Handy. The score includes a title, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The lyrics "Re-condi-te me" are written below the staff. The score is marked with "W.C." and "Handy".

Music Example No. 6: Penderecki, *Polish Requiem*, sketch

Libera me, Domine

1-3

Tam-Tam 1
Tam-Tam 2
Gr. Cassa

espr. quasi sussurando
Li-be-ra-me, Do-mi-ne, de mor-te ac-ter-na in di-e il-la tre-men-da,
cresc. molto
espr. quasi sussurando
Li-be-ra-me, Do-mi-ne, de mor-te ac-ter-na in di-e il-la tre-men-da,
cresc. molto
espr. quasi sussurando
Li-be-ra-me, Do-mi-ne, de mor-te ac-ter-na in di-e il-la tre-men-da,
cresc. molto
Li-be-ra-me, Do-mi-ne, de mor-te ac-ter-na in di-e il-la tre-men-da,
(senza sord.)
(senza sord.)

Music Example No. 7: Penderecki, *Polish Requiem, Libera me, Domine*, p. 1

Music Example No. 8: Penderecki, *Polish Requiem*, *Sanctus*, p. 1

What could have contributed to the modification of the general message was both the changed historical situation of Poland (the regaining of independence) and various characteristic features of later phases of Penderecki's creative life.

The Polish dimension of Penderecki's works is not limited to the existence of dedications, it also embraces quotations of important Polish religious hymns. In the *Te Deum*, written in 1978–80 and inspired by the election of the Polish Pope, John Paul II, the conceptual centre of the work is constituted by the quotation of the Polish religious hymn *Boże coś Polskę*, which during the long years of the Partitions played the role of the national anthem. When composing the *Polish Requiem* (based on a Latin liturgical text), Penderecki selected the quotation of the supplication *Święty Boże*, which in the Polish national and religious tradition used to be sung in moments of particular danger, as the Passacaglia theme.

The *Te Deum* and the *Polish Requiem*, written at a difficult time in Polish history, served to evoke the national ethos and “raise the spirits,”¹¹ thus giving a testimony to the emotional and personal attitude of the composer to the fate of his country.

From the perspective of time, Penderecki on the one hand confirmed his link with the events in Poland: “This was not really political music that I was writing, but it was music that was appropriate to the time during which we were living in Poland.”¹² And on the other hand, he, as an artist, had doubts as to such a direct involvement in history: “I cannot be sure that I have not sinned too much, especially against the free ‘I,’ in yielding to the imperatives of power and the national ethos. Works like the ‘Polish Requiem’ [...] are liable to be read as journalism,”¹³ as he wrote nearly ten years later.

The threat of Penderecki’s music being interpreted in terms of its involvement in current events concerns only one dimension of the works and only the audience familiar with the historical events. It is an additional dimension which does not affect the artistic value of the music. It is worth quoting the comment of one of the greatest violinists of the time, Anne-Sophie Mutter:

“When I heard the ‘Polish Requiem’ performed in Stuttgart, it opened up an entirely new sound world to me. The dynamic and emotional spectrum, ranging from most softly whispered pianissimos to heart rending fortissimos, was overwhelming.”¹⁴

¹¹To quote Henryk Sienkiewicz, the 19th-Century Polish writer, who – in the period of foreign Partitions – “raised the spirits” of the Poles by writing historical novels which referred back to the golden age of the country.

¹²Penderecki, *Labyrinth of Time*, p. 85 (interview with Penderecki by Ray Robinson).

¹³Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁴Anne Sophie Mutter in: *Schott aktuell* (1998), No. 6, p. 2.

4. The Regaining of Independence. Penderecki's Message for the New Century

1989–1990 ROUND TABLE AGREEMENTS – FALL OF COMMUNISM	
II. REGAINING OF INDEPENDENCE – 3 RD REPUBLIC OF POLAND	
POLAND REUNITED WITH EUROPE	
1990	insignia of legal Polish government residing in London handed over to Poland by the last Polish President in exile (December)
1991	Poland admitted to the Council of Europe
1992/93	Soviet troops withdrawn from Poland
1999	Poland becomes a member of the NATO
2004	Poland becomes a member of the European Union

4.1. Penderecki's Time of Synthesis – Monumental Symphonic-Oratorio Style

The regaining of independence by Poland in 1989 allows the composer to concentrate on an attempt to synthesise more than forty years of his experience in composing music. He composes two large-size vocal-instrumental works: *Seven Gates of Jerusalem* (1996), described by him as Symphony No. 7, and *Credo* (1998). He has this to say on the subject:

“Today we find ourselves at the time of great synthesis, the second fin de siècle. Everything that has been created over the last century is subject to re-evaluation. It seems to me that only the music that is written in a natural way and synthesises everything that has happened in the last several decades has a chance to survive.”¹⁵

Both works, *Seven Gates of Jerusalem* and *Credo*, constitute an attempt on the part of the composer to look from a distance not only

¹⁵Krzysztof Penderecki, Translation of a quotation from an interview in the Festival Bulletin of the 30th Warsaw Autumn Festival, 1986.

at his own œuvre, but also at the grand Judeo-Christian tradition of our culture. Despite considerable parallelisms between the two works (for instance, they use similar forces, contain corresponding themes and motifs as well as formal similarities), they differ to such an extent as the Old Testament differs from the New.

Handwritten musical score for "Magnus Dominus" by Penderecki. The score is for SATB choir and instruments. The top part shows the vocal staves with lyrics in Latin: "Mag-nus do-mi-nus et lau-da-bi-lis mi-nis in ec-cle-si-a". Below the vocal staves are the instrumental staves, including strings (Violins I, II, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses), woodwinds (Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons), and brass (Trumpets, Trombones, Tuba). The score is written in 3/2 time and features various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Music Example No. 9: Penderecki, *Seven Gates of Jerusalem, Magnus Dominus*, Schott, p. 1

Seven Gates of Jerusalem may be interpreted as the creed expressed from the perspective of the Old Testament, where the voices of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel proclaim the power of Yahweh and the coming of the Messiah. Penderecki speaks with pathos, solemnity and power. He opens his work with an austere, iterative theme *Magnus Dominus* (see Music Example No. 9) and closes it with a concluding apotheosis of the “Holy City” which has lasted for 3000 years as a symbol of the power of Yahweh, who “reget nos in saecula”. It is the power of Yahweh that is referred to by the repetitive theme of the movement *Si oblitus fuero*; it is the power of Yahweh that is craved by man in the supplicatory *De profundis* (see Music Example No. 10).

The musical score is for three voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) and piano. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 64. The lyrics are: "De pro - fun - dis cla - ma - vi ad de - um mi - se - re - re". The music is in a minor key with a somber, repetitive melodic line in the piano accompaniment and vocal parts.

Music Example No. 10: Penderecki, *Seven Gates of Jerusalem*, *De profundis*, Schott, p. 1

The great scene of Ezekiel’s prophecy in the sixth movement is also a testimony to it. Despite the presence of melodically extended solo parts, what prevails is the pathetic, monumental musical gesture, the harmonic mass of the expanded orchestra and choir, which seems to present symbolically the fate of the community, of the consecutive generations of the Chosen People.

The “Oregon” *Credo* unfolds in a different dimension. It expresses the faith that the sacrifice of the Cross, affirmed by the testimony of the Gospel, constitutes the loving fulfilment of the promise to es-

tablish the New Covenant. The new nature of the relationship between man and God, deprived of fear and the sense of distance, full of closeness and subjectivity, finds its musical equivalent in individualised solo vocal and instrumental parts, full of lyrical expression and remaining in dialogue with each other, as well as in the reduced means and transparency of texture. The incorporation of Polish extracts, familiar to the composer from his childhood, emphasises the personal, warm and emotional attitude of man to the Creator.

Seven Gates of Jerusalem and *Credo*, the two monumental works by Penderecki, are not only a significant artistic achievement of the composer and the synthesis of his hitherto experiences. They are also an act of courage of the artist who refers to the sphere of the sacred through music and above music and strongly publicly professes his faith in God, which is his message for the end of the 20th Century.

4.2. Krzysztof Penderecki in the Sphere of Classical Beauty

In the 1990s, Penderecki accomplishes a synthesis of his hitherto composition experiences and emphasises the unity and continuity of the development of his music, in spite of transformations in his musical language. Having fulfilled obligations to the history of the now independent Poland and having passed the symbolic musical message about values to the audiences, the composer can now open a new phase of his creative life. After a clear message for the end of the century and the composer's personal profession of faith carried by *The Seven Gates of Jerusalem* and *Credo*, he returns to the sphere of absolute music: chamber and "concertante" style music. He composes: a Sonata for violin and piano (2000), a Sextet for clarinet, horn, string trio and piano (2000), a Concerto grosso for three cellos and symphony orchestra (2001), and finally a Piano Concerto (2002). He writes chamber pieces of beautiful Classical proportions which invite joint music-making. In these works, Penderecki engages in a musical dialogue with the great tradition of the past – the music of Mozart, Schubert or Brahms, that focuses on the Classical understanding of beauty, with "proportio et claritas" taken to be its foundation.